

"BOARD CERTIFICATION: Engage Excellence"



THE ABOHN REPORT

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Spring 2021 Volume 44 Issue 1

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A Message from the ABOHN Chair *by Pam Swann, RN, COHN*

What an extraordinary year we have been through, as a nation, as occupational health nurses, and as ABOHN certificants!

The pandemic has, of course, required much of everyone's time and energy; how challenging life has been since this all started! As occupational health nurses we stand/have stood on the front line of caring for our patients, not only in a physical way, but also ensuring the mental wellbeing of those we are responsible for. Our fight is not over, but I am encouraged by the reduction in positive tests and the promotion of vaccination as a final way to end this pandemic. Thank you for your steadfast compassion and readiness to serve and for continuing to promote the ABOHN standard of excellence. I honor you with gratitude.



January saw another Board of Directors meeting via zoom; not the chosen way to have the meeting as it is always preferable to see everyone face-to-face, but successful just the same. The most exciting part of this past meeting, in my opinion, are our new board members, Jennifer Morris, COHN, Karen Jewell, COHN-S, and Shannon Berryhill, COHN-S/CM. My hope is that June will see us all back together again in one location.

The Board of Directors and staff hold our certificants in very high esteem; in these past trying days, weeks, and months occupational health certification has shown itself to be a shining star in the fight for our employees/workers safety and wellbeing. Stay well and Shine On! 

ABOHN staff are available to answer any of your certification questions. Our website, www.abohn.org, is also a great way to find up-to-date information on the latest news, continuing education links, upcoming events, as well as job postings. You can contact the ABOHN office by phone at 630-789-5799 or by email at info@aborn.org.

Celebrate!!!

Occupational Health Nurses Week!

April 11 -17, 2021

ABOHN salutes and celebrates all OHNs, active and retired, for their work in keeping workers and worker populations safe and healthy. The Occupational Health Nurse brings a unique perspective to management and clinical roles, acting as an employee advocate while balancing the needs of the organization.



ABOHN 2020-2021 Board of Directors

ABOHN is governed by a Board of Directors composed of certified occupational health nurses and one public member that are selected to be representative of the community of certified occupational health nurses. The responsibilities of the Board include establishing criteria for certification and setting policies to maintain a valid certification program.



Pam Swann



Melinda Cordova



Nathan Britt



Marilyn Brownlee



Ginny Carlson



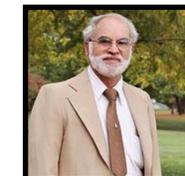
Kari Kilbride



Daurice Holly



Beth Dammann



David Martin



Shelly Warrick

Governing Council

Chair: Pam Swann, RN, COHN

Secretary: Melinda Cordova, BSN, RN, COHN/CM

Treasurer: Kari Kilbride, MPH, RN, BSN, COHN-S

COHN-S Chair: Kari Kilbride, MPH, RN, BSN, COHN-S

COHN Chair: Daurice Holly, RN, COHN, CCM, FAAOHN

CM Chair: Melinda Cordova, BSN, RN, COHN/CM

Directors

Nathan Britt, MSN, APRN, NP-C, COHN-S

Marilyn Brownlee, NP-PHC, FNP-C, DIH (Toronto), MScN, COHN-S/CM (ABOHN BOD Member – At- Large)

Ginny Carlson, MPH, RN, COHN-S, FAAOHN

Beth Dammann, BAN, MPH, COHN-S

David Martin, (ABOHN BOD Pubic Member)

Shelly Warrick, MSN, COHN-S, CIC-Csp

CALLING COHN and COHN/CM credential holders!

ABOHN will be recruiting for Board of Director to serve for the June 2022 – June 2024 term.

We are currently in need of Board of Directors who hold

COHN and/or COHN/CM

More information and applications will be sent through the weekly Friday email
at the end of August.

Please consider using your talents and experience to help guide the vision and mission of ABOHN's work.

Cohort Class of 2020

CONGRATULATIONS

ABOHN NEWLY BOARD CERTIFIED

BOARD CERTIFICATION: ENGAGE EXCELLENCE

Join us in congratulating these occupational health nurses for their accomplishments and for their right to use the COHN, COHN-S, and CM credentials which they gained last year by passing stringent examinations for certification.

We proudly present the ABOHN Class of 2020

Certified Occupational Health Nurse - (COHN)

Barbare, Melissa
Barnes, Melissa
Clark, Christina
Cogswell, Courtney
Dunkling, Amber
Foster, Sandra
Frantz, Jenee
Jacobs, Eva-Maria
King, Brandon

Konoza, Mimi
Lofties, Jean
Maynard, Peggy
Mcnease, Christy
McQuillan, Mindy
Nocella, Wanda
Norman, Teresa
Owens, Johanna
Pearl, Rose

Peterson, Angela
Rowell, Lynda
Solares, Rosa
Szulczewski, Sharon
Thompson, Elizabeth
Walker, Darci
Warren, Chandra
Wiley, Karen
Wirth, Christina

Certified Occupational Health Nurse - Specialist (COHN-S)

Almes, Elizabeth
Anderson, Scott
Bach, Katelyn
Beall, Carol
Bessellieu, Natasha
Brown, Katherine
Byrne, James
Casia, Carla
Coover, LeAnne
De Leon, Brittany
Ferrara, Laura
Figura-Delia, Patricia

Fox, Mary
Franquiz Rivera, Ricardo
Gibbons, Geraldine
Glover, Judith
Gray, Wendy
Jennings, David
Kinyua, Jesse
Krewson, Tanya
Lassila, Lisa
Livermore, Jennifer
Matuzik, Katherine
McDonald, Joseph
Murray, Veronica

Nicolaides, Jeff
Oehrle, Deborah
Roche, Michelle
Rollins, Kelly
Ruth, Ava
Savage, Ruby
Schaefer, Marcelita
Seo, Su Jin
Smith, Kimberley
Thompson, Allison
Troyer, Amy
Ziegenfuss, Mary
Zimmerman, Jennifer

Case Management - (CM)

Bloom, Debra
Byun, Hannah
Chan, Cindy
Coglianese, Wendy

Day, Angela
Lipp, Kimberly
Mason, Renee
Monroe, Zackie

Smith, Cody
Van Houten, Judith
Werner, Rebecca

ABOHN Board of Director Activities Reported by Lucy Carlson ED

Our Mission

ABOHN's mission is to promote a standard of excellence in occupational health nursing through credentialing.

In the face of the challenges posed by the pandemic, the ABOHN Board of Directors (BOD) had a very productive six months in support of the mission and goals of ABOHN, certified OHNs and examination applicants.

Semi-annual BOD Meeting

Due to the travel restrictions related to the pandemic, the ABOHN BOD met virtually on January 27-29, 2021 for the semi-annual board meeting. The virtual meetings went extremely well due to the willingness of each BOD member to commit their time and attention. Every item on the full agenda was accomplished!

Important agenda items included:

- Presentation of nominees for BOD positions and the new term for EDAC and Governing Council
- Approval of the 2021-26 Strategic Plan
- Review of examination passing rates and preparations for the annual exam development process
- Annual budget review and approval
- Review of Benefits of Certification survey results

BOD Committees - Directors participate on core committees that contribute to ABOHN operations. Highlights of committee activities during the past six months include:

- **Research Committee** published a call for proposals for an applied research study to demonstrate the value OHNs are providing during the COVID 19 pandemic. Watch for the survey and please participate in this important work! In addition, the committee applied on behalf of ABOHN as an OSHA Alliance Group.
- **Public Relations Committee** replaced the OHN and Employer marketing brochures with updated flyers that are suitable for electronic distribution and printing. They developed power points on Occupational Health Nursing and OHN Board Certification. Final versions will be available for certificant use.
- **Nominations Committee** recruited a slate of excellent candidates for the 2021-23 BOD term. If you were not selected this time, please apply again! In addition, a full slate was recruited for the 2021-23 EDAC committees. Watch for announcements of future ABOHN volunteer opportunities. We value you!
- **Finance Committee** prepared and presented the ABOHN Annual Budget for approval. The committee investigated options for an employee retirement plan and received approval to offer a Simple IRA.
- **Strategic Planning Committee** developed the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. The focus of the goals and initiatives are to keep ABOHN a vital and sustainable organization; continue providing customer value, compliance with regulatory requirements, and outreach & growth.

Our Vision

ABOHN Certification is recognized and valued as the standard to maximize the health and safety of workers worldwide

ABOHN Advocacy

Our ABOHN Vision is for OHN certification to be recognized and valued as the standard to maximize the health and safety of workers worldwide. As part of our work to fulfill the ABOHN vision, the Executive Director, Lucy Carlson, and BOD have been engaged in advocacy work with our partners in worker health and safety, including AIHA and NSC. In the past six months, ABOHN has joined our partners in signing letters of support to the U.S. Congress supporting OSHA and NIOSH/ERC funding, and to the CDC urging updates to its guidance and recognize aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2. In addition, ABOHN was a vendor and Lucy provided video presentations to promote occupational health nursing and certification at the AAOHN, APHA, AOHP, SIGMA and OH-BWC conferences.

2021-2026 Strategic Plan

Our Decision Principles

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and promote credentialing standards for professional occupational health nurses. Publicly recognize individuals who demonstrate that they meet these standards. Elevate the quality of occupational health nursing practice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulate the development of improved educational standards and programs in the field of occupational health nursing. Encourage occupational health nurses to continue their professional education. Create value for employers, their employees and the occupational health professional. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek inclusion by partnering with organization that share ABOHN’s mission and values. Perform the above by demonstrating inclusivity without consideration of national origin, race, creed, disability, color, age, and gender. |
|--|--|--|

ABOHN Overarching Strategic Priorities

Strategy 1 Customer Value	Strategy 2 Quality	Strategy 3 Sustainability	Strategy 4 Outreach and Growth
2021-2026 Key Objectives			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support to applicants/candidates Recognize currently certified Periodic Contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with regulatory guidelines Compliance with AB-OHN Bylaws and Policies & Procedures Assess Vendor Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABOHN remains financially viable Security maintained Item Bank maintained in continual state of readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Relations
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ABOHN Overarching Strategic Priorities

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Survey employers on value provided by OHNs during COVID White paper and/or published study on value of OHNs base on metrics (survey) Celebrate certificant accomplishments Website updates and redesign within budget Website available as mobile app? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Analysis remain up to date (due 2023) NCCA Accreditation timely renewal & Recert (due 2023) RFP for Testing Vendor (due 2022) Discussion of pass rates biannually Recruit and maintain diverse OHNs for BOD 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic use of budget to support initiatives, goals Recruit and maintain diverse OHNs for EDAC/SSC/SMEs Investigate feasibility to convert to all remote office Investigate feasibility for stand alone certification – CM Global outreach 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expand markets for advertisements Increase involvement with partnerships, NISOH, ASSP, CCM, APHA Awareness of OHN professions: nursing schools Increase awareness of value of ABOHN certification: OHN institutions Update brochures, flyers, logo, etc. Expand use of social media
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Celebrate Occupational Health Nurses Week!

OHN Week is a national observance to recognize and celebrate YOU as members of the occupational and environmental health nursing profession. Annually, Occupational Health Nurses Week is selected by AAOHN for dates in April. The week also commemorates the inception of the first and largest professional association for occupational and environmental health nurses. Begun in 1942, with 300 nurses from 16 states, the organization today has 70 chapters and over 4,000 members dedicated to advancing the health, safety and productivity of domestic and global workforces by providing education, research, public policy and practice resources for occupational and environmental health nurses.



ABOHN salutes and celebrates all OHNs for the work they do everyday, keeping workers and worker populations safe and healthy.



Congratulations and don't forget to **Celebrate!**



ABOHN Research Award



The purpose of the 2020-2021 Applied Research Grant is to demonstrate the value occupational health nurses are providing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ABOHN Research Committee has selected:

Lisa M. Hunwardsen, BS, RN, OHN
MPH Trainee, Occupational and Environmental Health Nursing
Midwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety
University of Minnesota School of Public Health

Lisa Hunwardsen is an Occupational Health Nurse at Mayo Clinic Health System based in Rochester, MN. In this role she is responsible for employee health in the SWMN Region, teaching and advising employees on how to work safely and assisting with immunizations and injury case management at five southern MN locations. Ms. Hunwardsen has worked for Mayo Clinic Health System for 20 years. With the ABOHN research award, Lisa will develop and deploy a mixed methods survey designed to collect practicing OEHNs' experiences and perspectives surrounding the SARS CoV-2 pandemic and the post-pandemic occupational health needs and priorities. Ms. Hunwardsen is currently a NIOSH trainee enrolled in the Occupational Environmental Health Nursing program in the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota. Ms. Hunwardsen received a Bachelor of Science degree from Iowa State University in 1990 and received her nursing degree at Mercy School of Health Sciences in Des Moines, Iowa in 1994. Lisa enjoys being active and has been a runner for many years, including completing her first marathon in 2019. Lisa has been married for almost 30 years, and she and her husband have two adult children that she adores.

The Virtual AAOHN National Conference!

The 2021 AAOHN National Conference is coming soon!

Mark your calendars for:

April 13-14, 2021 and **April 20-21, 2021**

and stop by the ABOHN Virtual Booth!

ABOHN is delighted to announce we have secured a special discounted rate for ABOHN members to attend the [AAOHN National Conference: Providing Pathways to Worker Wellbeing](#), the premiere event for occupational health and safety professionals. Use discount code **ABOHNEB** when you [register](#) for the full conference to receive this one-time discount:

AAOHN Member Rate: \$349
 AAOHN Non-Member Rate: \$549



The ABOHN 2021 Virtual Awards Presentation and Reception

Please join us on:

Wednesday, April 14 | 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm CT

At the [AAOHN 2021 National Conference: Providing Pathways to Worker Wellbeing](#)

- AAOHN Conference attendees will receive the ABOHN Reception Registration link a few weeks before the event.
- Registration is required to attend the ABOHN 2021 Virtual Awards Presentation and Reception. You will receive a Zoom link before the event.
- Board certified and non-certified OHNs who register to attend this event will have an option to put their name in to win one of these great prizes:

For Certified OHNs

For Non-Certified OHNs



CM Application and Exam Fee - \$400.00 value

Annual Renewal or Recertification Fee - Up to \$200.00 value

COHN or COHN-S Exam Fee - \$400.00 value

Certified Self-Assessment Test - \$100.00 value

- Your name will be entered at time of registration for the ABOHN Reception.
- The raffle will be held at the end of the Awards Presentations.

Good luck!

We hope to see you at our **Virtual Booth**

and at

The ABOHN 2021 Virtual Awards Presentation and Reception!

Credentialing Statistics—Pass Rate Percentage

Table 2 (right)

The number of COHN and COHN-S candidates who passed their certification examination in 2020 was down significantly.

ABOHN had a “perfect storm” of outside influences that affected our exam takers and our testing agent.

Please see below for additional information.

Exam Year	COHN			COHN-S			CM		
	Candidates	Number Passed	Percentage Passed	Candidates	Number Passed	Percentage Passed	Candidates	Number Passed	Percentage Passed
2015	64	48	75%	148	102	69%	22	18	82%
2016	53	34	64.2%	119	70	58.8%	23	18	78.3%
2017	84	68	80.9%	117	82	70.0%	14	9	64.2%
2018	99	70	71.4%	114	65	58.0%	14	12	85.7%
2019	144	92	63.9%	188	127	67.6%	21	17	81%
2020	61	27	44.3%	77	38	49.3%	16	12	75%

Table 1 – Pass Rate Percentage

Credentialing Statistics—Year End

The ABOHN Board of Directors are tasked with many challenges in order to sustain a specialty credentialing program. Table 2 shows the official ABOHN Active, Inactive and Retired certification holders that were in our database system as of 12/31/2020. As the base of our credential holders approach retirement age, we see a decline in Active credential holders.

CREDENTIAL	ACTIVE	INACTIVE	RETIRED	ACTIVE: Credential holders who have met the criteria to hold certification.
COHN	773	10	76	INACTIVE: Credential holders who have not met one or more requirements for active status and have opted to take inactive status until they are compliant with the requirements.
COHN/CM	154	1	17	
COHN-S	1569	26	462	
COHN-S/CM	346	6	127	
Total 12/31/2020*	2842	43	682	
Total 12/31/2019	3077	33	617	RETIRED: Credential holders no longer in practice and maintain their retirement status with ABOHN.

*These numbers do not include those certificants' whose renewal and/or recertification paperwork was processed after 12/31/2020.

Table 2- Year End Statistics

COVID 19—A “Perfect Storm”

The COVID-19 pandemic threw a wrench in our strategic planning and in the lives of occupational health nurses as the responsibility for keeping workers safe brought on a whole new meaning.

In **Table 1, Credentialing Statistics – Pass Rate Percentage** the 2020 numbers look bleak. But they don’t tell the whole story!

The ABOHN Practice Analysis (PA) is the driving force behind the development of our examinations. The information determined in the 2018 PA led the ABOHN Board of Directors (BOD) to plan for a 50% revision/update of the existing exams. To address these updates, the BOD recruited Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to serve on the Exam Development Committee (EDAC). This group of volunteers worked throughout 2019 revising and updating the existing exams and writing hundreds of new and revised questions for the COHN, COHN-S and CM exams.

The BOD plans included a “Testing Black Out” period. As with many businesses, large and small, the pandemic impacted our schedule. ABOHN experienced a “perfect storm” of outside influences that disrupted our testing schedule, our candidates, and our testing agency, PSI. The Testing Black Out was scheduled for December 2019 through February 2020. Testing was to resume in March 2020 with the goal of achieving a significant number of candidates to test by month’s end. Just as testing restarted, the world shut down in March 2020. So did our testing capabilities.

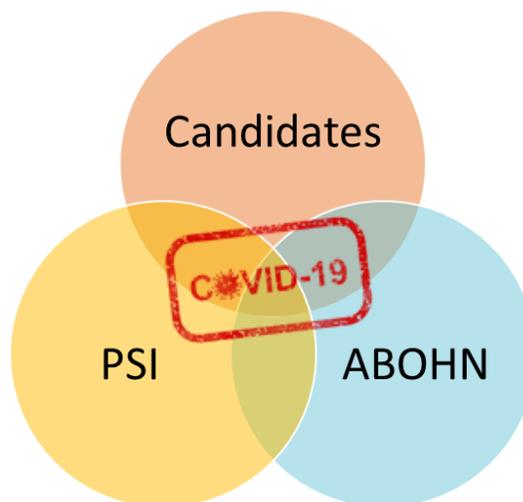
PSI testing sites were closed during the month of March and into May. Reopening was sporadic and COVID closures happened at a moments notice. OHNs everywhere experienced a dramatic shift in their lives, especially their work schedules. This stress affected candidates on many levels. Many of the OHNs scheduled to take the exam in March reported that the farther away the testing dates opened, the less confident they felt. Most of these issues came from the change in work schedules with no time to devote to studying for the exam.

PSI, as a large organization, had to meet each state and county’s regulations for closing and re-opening. This constant state of sporadic opening/closing test sites added another element of stress for testing candidates.

THE ABOHN BOD decided that the next phase of work on our exams needed to resume. With a final push to get candidates to take the test by the end of August 2020, the number of candidates who sat for the exam was extremely low. The number of exam takers is a critical piece for statistically evaluating the exam performance. The greater number of examinees results in a psychometrically sound exam development result. The small number of ABOHN exam takers directly affects our low pass rates. We were under 50% of our average number of exam takers for COHN and COHN-S, whereas we met our usual number of CM examinees and our the CM pass rate stayed at a firm 75%.

Our renewal and recertification were down slightly too, as indicated in **Table 2. – Credentialing Statistics – Year End**. This snapshot does not include those certificants whose renewal and/or recertification paperwork was processed after 12/31/2020. We did have a significant number of our certified OHNs who opted to take the retirement status in 2020, and more certified nurses took Inactive status as they were unable to meet the 5 year recertification requirements by the end of 2020.

The 2021 Strategic Plan has emphasis on reaching more OHNs and helping them on their professional career journey to become Board Certified.



Application, Renewal and Recertification Fees and Guidelines

	COHN/COHN-S	Case Management	Information
Application Fee	\$150.00	\$150.00	Good for 90 days from the date of approval from the ABOHN office.
Examination Fee	\$400.00	\$250.00	Must be paid within 90 days from the date of the invoice from the ABOHN office and is good for 120 days.*
Exam Authorization (Extension Fee)	\$50.00	\$50.00	One time, 60 day extension to the original 120 day authorization period.

* If you fail to schedule an appointment and sit for your examination before the expiration date, your examination authorization will be voided and you will have to pay for another application and examination

Yearly Renewal Fee	\$150.00	\$50.00	Renewal payments are required every year before the credential holders' expiration date.
Recertification Fee	\$150.00	\$50.00	Recertification occurs every 5 years. Paperwork and the yearly renewal fee is required before the credential holders' expiration date.
Late Fee	\$100.00		A late fee is charged if ABOHN does not receive your Recertification or Renewal paperwork and annual fee by the due date of your credential.

ALL ABOHN FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE

Table 3 – Application, Renewal and Recertification Fees and Guidelines

ABOHN

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 Palos Heights, IL 60463
 630-789-5799
 info@abohn.org
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